The Sacred Seeds of Liberty

FAITH, SCRIPTURE AND THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN FREEDOM

CELEBRATING AMERICA'S STORY

"This day should be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty... with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more."

John Adams to his wife Abigail, July 3rd, 1776

250 Years

Rediscovering Our Christian History

CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

The Basis of the Declaration of Independence

The United States of America is a nation providentially prepared for Christian self-government and to be a beacon of liberty. Its foundation of religious freedom built a great and moral nation that became the hope of the peoples of the world. It stands today, as John Winthrop proclaimed, a "city upon a hill…the eyes of all people are upon us."

The Pilgrims, the Puritans, the adventurers, entrepreneurs, explorers, and settlers shared a common conviction based on Christ and the Word of God. This belief rewarded them so abundantly that they grew into great communities, each united in principles that ultimately led to their union. The story of the power of their sacrifices and trust, told in their own words, must be retold across generations, faithfully teaching the children unless all be lost.

But why in their own words? The stirring words of the Declaration of Independence are familiar and often quoted, but are they fully understood? Have we lost the meaning of those far-ringing words and phrases? The quotes given here in the founders' words remind us that the source of the liberty to which they pledged their lives, fortunes, and honor was Christ and the word of God.

The United States of America is unique in all history because it was built on Christ.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States.

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

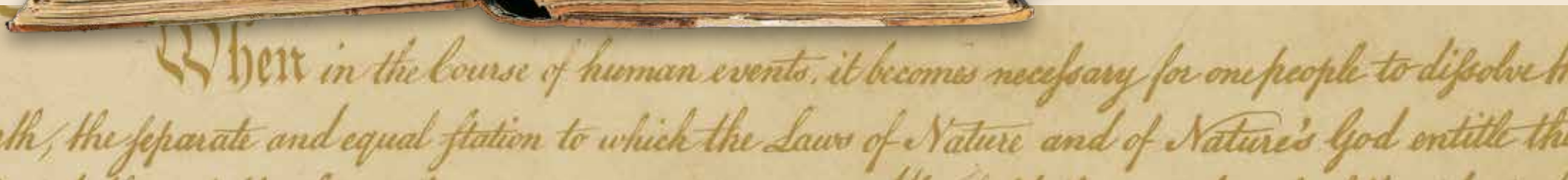
"WHEN IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS..."

America's Founders were students of history because the wisdom of times past, particularly in addressing the critical subject of government, is instructive, situating them in history and, from that context, clarifying their duty to God and mankind.

"History, by apprising [citizens] of the past will enable them to judge of the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations.

It will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men..."

Thomas Jefferson, 1782[1]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CHRIST AND LIBERTY

The Declaration, approved on July 4th, was unique in the annals of time. It was wrought out of what Jefferson called…

…*"the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or in the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, &c."*

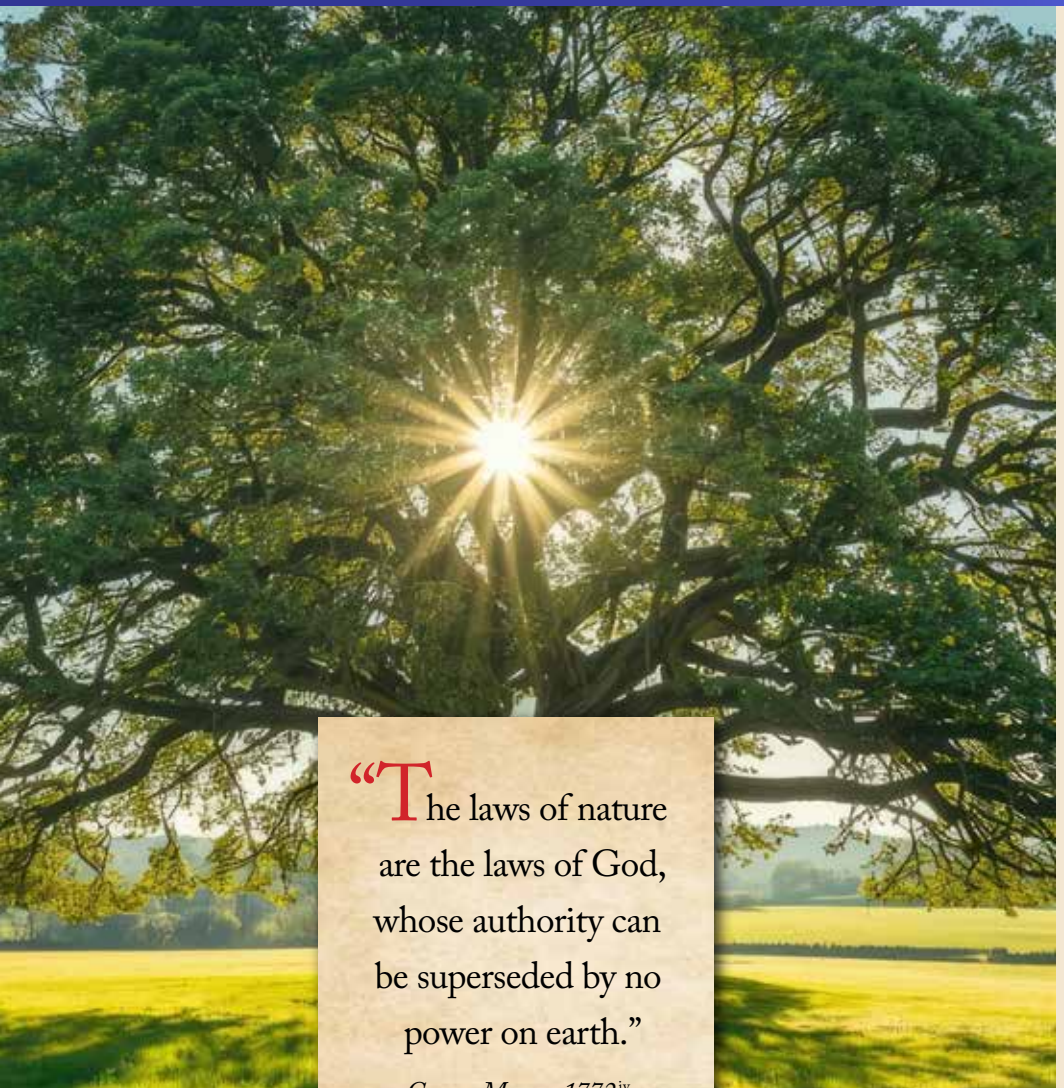
Thomas Jefferson, 1825[ii]

"The Birthday of the Nation is indissolubly linked to the birthday of the Savior … the Declaration of Independence first organized the social compact on the foundation of the Redeemer's mission upon earth . . . it laid the cornerstone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity."

John Quincy Adams, 1837[iii]

The Old North Church, Boston. Built in 1723—notable for its role in Paul Revere's midnight ride on April 18, 1775.

THE INALIENABLE LAWS OF NATURE AND NATURE'S GOD



"The laws of nature are the laws of God, whose authority can be superseded by no power on earth."

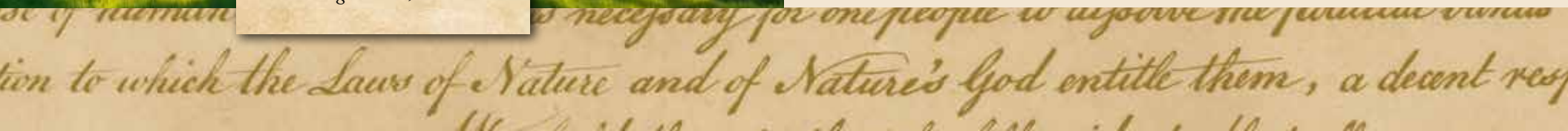
George Mason, 1772[iv]

"*Kings or parliaments could not give the rights essential to happiness… We claim them from a higher source – from the King of kings, and Lord of all the earth.*"

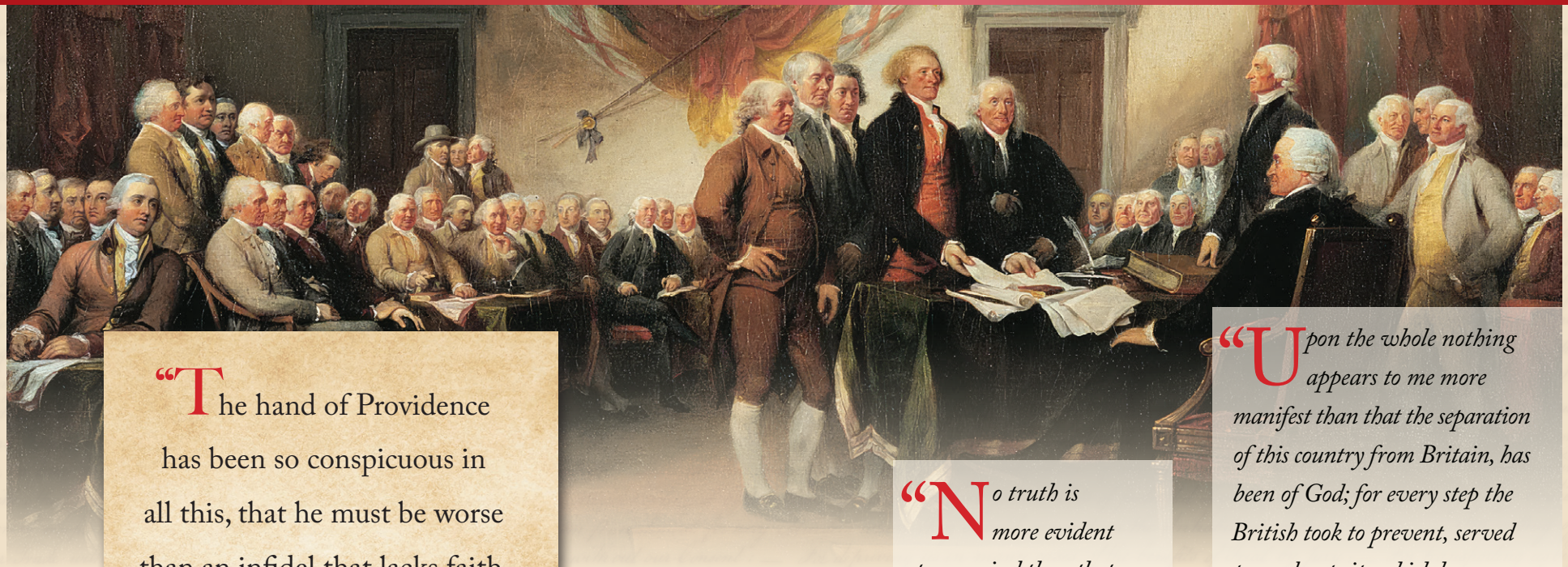
John Dickinson[v]

"*He therefore is the truest friend to the liberty . . . will not suffer a man to be chosen unto any office of power and trust who is not a wise and virtuous man . . . The sum of all, if we would most truly enjoy this gift of Heaven, let us become a virtuous people.*"

Sam Adams, 1748[vi]



WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SACRED AND UNDENIABLE



"The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all this, that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked, that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations."

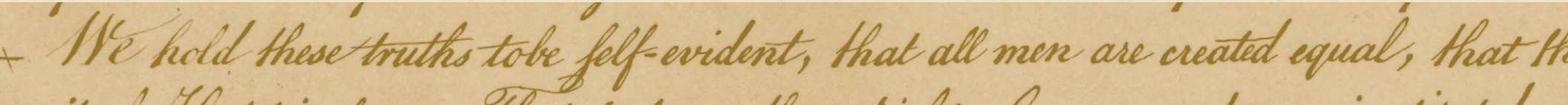
George Washington, 1778[vii]

"No truth is more evident to my mind than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people."

Noah Webster[viii]

"Upon the whole nothing appears to me more manifest than that the separation of this country from Britain, has been of God; for every step the British took to prevent, served to accelerate it, which has generally been the case when men have undertaken to go in opposition to the course of Providence, and to make war with the nature of things."

Rev. John Witherspoon, 1782[ix]



IT'S THEIR RIGHT... THEIR DUTY

"Government is instituted for the common good; for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people; and not for profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men; therefore, the people alone have an incontestable, unalienable, and indefeasible right to institute government; and to reform, alter, or totally change the same, when their protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness require it."

John Adams, 1776[x]

"The law of nature and the law of revelation are both Divine: they flow, though in different channels, from the same adorable source. It is indeed preposterous to separate them from each other."

James Wilson[xi]

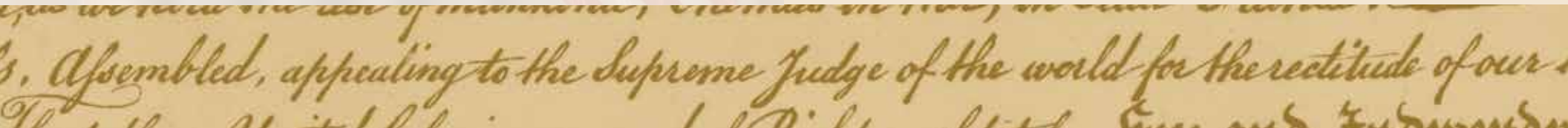
APPEALING TO THE SUPREME JUDGE OF THE WORLD

"..the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; it is he who will save." Isaiah 33:22

God judges the world, but by what principles, by what process, with what result?

"And what were these general Principles? I answer, the general Principles of Christianity, in which all these Sects were United: And the general Principles of English and American Liberty, in which all those young Men United, and which had United all Parties in America, in Majorities sufficient to assert and maintain her Independence."

John Adams, 1813[xii]



WASHINGTON'S PRAYER *and our hope*

A leader who relied on Divine Providence, Washington often led his troops in prayers.

"…that God would have you…in his Holy protection…that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of the mind, which were the characteristics of the divine Author of our blessed religion without an humble imitation of whose example, in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation."

George Washington, 1783[xiii]

America's Founding Documents Demonstrate and Honor the Biblical Principles of Government*

The Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution contain principles consistent with the Bible. Congress declared it so when it passed Public Law 97-280 on October 4, 1982, and the President signed it into law. It begins, "Whereas Biblical teachings inspired concepts of civil government that are contained in our Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States…renewing our knowledge of and faith in God through Holy Scripture can strengthen us as a nation and a people…"

Here are some of those ideas:

1. *A respect for and protection of private property*

The founders believed that the right to own and use property was a God-given right. "…no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property…" Fifth Amendment, Exodus 20:15,17

2. *Governments secure God-given rights*

Governments do not grant rights. "All men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights…life, liberty, pursuit of happiness…" Declaration of Independence. Governments merely secure the God-given rights and make it possible for men to enjoy them.

3. *Limited government, enumerated powers*

Authority is limited to the powers delegated in the Constitution. The Declaration says "…deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed…" establishes this point, and the Tenth Amendment makes clear that power is reserved to the States, or to the people. Deuteronomy 17:14-20 is an example of how God clearly intended government to be limited in power.

*Eidsmoe, John, Christianity and the Constitution, Baker Book House Co., 1987, pp. 355-377

Celebrate 250 years of America's story—

and rediscover our heritage of Christian liberty that shaped the nation. Take the next step by ordering this booklet in bulk (packs of 5 or more) to share with your church family or community organization. Inspire others with the principles that have guided our nation—start the conversation today.

Visit FACE.net/America250

FOOTNOTES:

i. Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, 1782.
ii. From Thomas Jefferson to Henry Lee, 8 May 1825.
iii. John Quincy Adams, Speech on Independence Day, July 4, 1837.
iv. Robin v. Hardaway (1772).
v. An Address to the Committee of Correspondence in Barbados.
vi. Essay published in The Advertiser, 1748.
vii. George Washington, letter to Thomas Nelson, August 20, 1778.
viii. From the Preface to the 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language.
ix. John Witherspoon, "Sermon delivered at a Public Thanksgiving, after Peace," November 28, 1782.
x. John Adams, Thoughts on Government, 1776.
xi. James Wilson, "Lectures on Law."
xii. John Adams, Letter to Thomas Jefferson, 28 June 1813.
xiii. From George Washington to the States, 8 June 1783.
xiv. Verna Hall, "Why We Must Remember America's Christian History, A Study of Psalm 78," The Christian History of the U.S. Constitution Vol. III.

The Foundation for American Christian Education was founded in 1964 to publish and teach America's Christian history and authentic method of education based in American Christian principles.

Find us at www.face.net

"If American Christians will accept the responsibility for our nation's situation, and see that our forgetting God's works, God's actions, is the primal cause of our problems, then the repenting of this sin of omission, coupled with the willingness to learn what God has done—the events of history—will begin, with the Lord's blessing, the restoring and rebuilding of our nation."

Verna Hall[xiv]

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